

Consulate General of Ireland

Newsletter for the U.S. Southeast

April 2017

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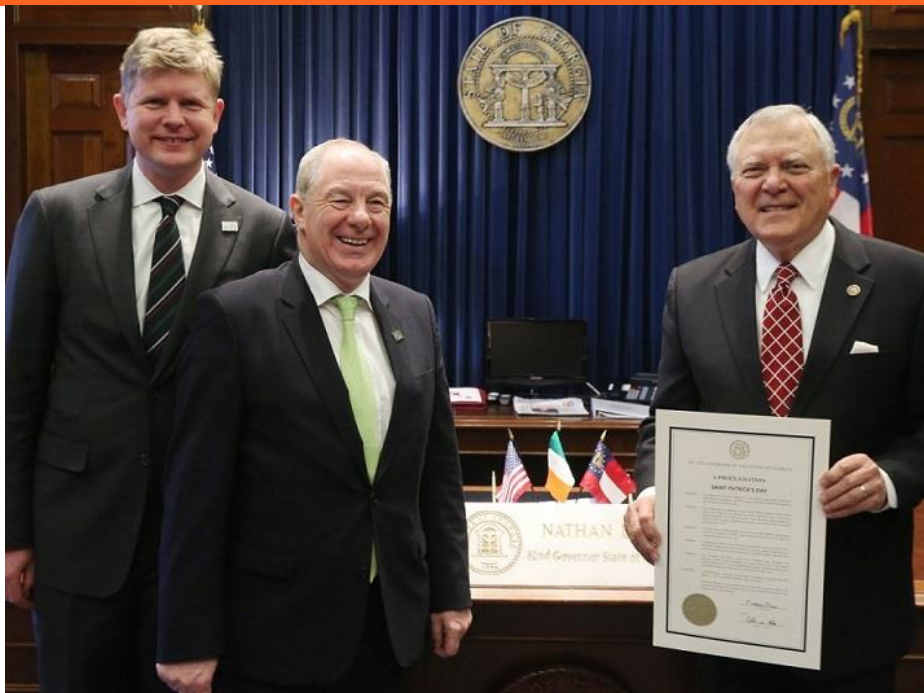
atlantacg@dfa.ie

Consulate General of Ireland
Monarch Plaza, Suite 260,
3414 Peachtree Road NE
Atlanta, GA 30326
Tel: +1-404-554-4980
Fax: +1-678-235-2201

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Michael Ring, TD, Ireland's Minister of State for Regional Economic Development and Consul General Stephens receive a St. Patrick's Day Proclamation from Georgia Governor Nathan Deal.

Message from the Consul General

A chairde,

Our second Ministerial visit this St Patrick's Day season was a great success. Michael Ring, T.D., our Minister of State for Regional Economic Development, drew attention to the strong and reciprocal commercial relationship between Ireland and Georgia, underlined our commitment to our diaspora in the Southeast and supported IDA efforts to expand U.S. investment into Ireland.

He also spoke to our partners about the Government's BREXIT strategy, the priority we give to our bilateral relationship with Georgia and the significance of the Taoiseach's plans to give citizens abroad the right to vote for our President.

His meeting with Governor Deal, pictured above, was a highlight. The Governor tweeted afterwards "From yesterday's heritage to today's jobs, GA's connection with Ireland is as strong as ever....."

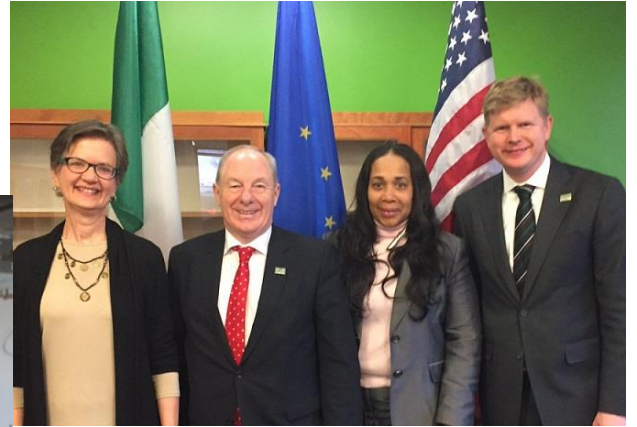
I recommend that you read the Minister's March 17th OP Ed in the [Savannah Morning News](#) on the ever-stronger Ireland-Georgia connection.

Shane Stephens

Irish Business and Culture Around the Southeast

Minister Michael Ring, TD, Minister of State for Regional Economic Development, visits Georgia March 13-17.

The Minister began visited the Consulate, meeting Consul General Stephens and staff members Carol Jordan and Sondra Reed.



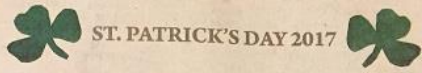
Left: Touring new Athens, GA facilities of Cork-based Voxpro with Christina Kenny; and warm greetings from Athens Mayor Nancy Denson



Below: The Minister congratulates US General Manager John Browne on the recent launch of Sysnet's US operations in Atlanta

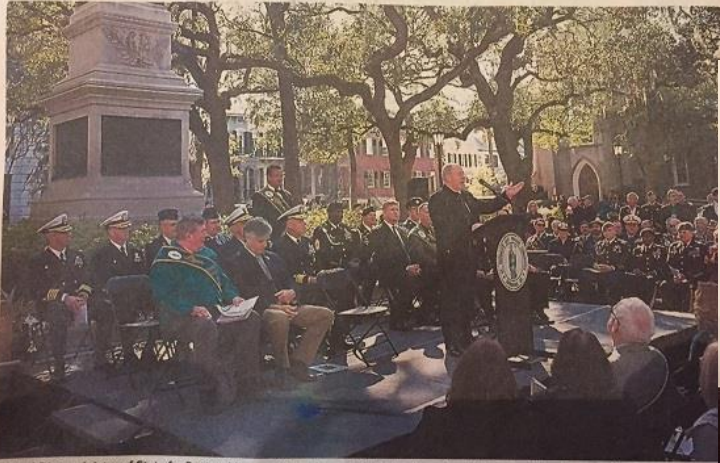


Minister Ring invited U.S. tech investors to Ireland at IDA programme in Atlanta



ST. PATRICK'S DAY 2017

CITY HONORS TRADITION



Michael Ring, minister of State for Regional Economic Development in Ireland, speaks to those in attendance at the ceremony on Thursday. The annual ceremony takes place the day before St. Patrick's Day to honor revolutionary hero William Jasper and other personnel who sacrifice their lives for their country. (Photos by Josh Galemore/Savannah Morning News)

St. Patrick's Day Savannah

Renewing Ireland-Savannah bonds with Mayor DeLoach, wearing his new Foxford Woolen Mills scarf presented by the Minister.



Minister Ring addresses the annual Sgt. William Jasper commemoration ceremony. Looking on and also speaking were the Parade's Grand Marshall, Dennis Counihan and his brother, Brian Counihan, the Parade Committee's Chair.

Right: fascinating historical account of early Irish community at Savannah's Catholic Cemetery, with Msgr William O'Neill and Dr. Steven Engel



Also participating in Savannah's St. Patrick's Day events with Minister Ring and CG Stephens were members of the Irish Air Corps, An Garda Síochána and the Irish Prison Service

St. Patrick's Day celebrations and commemorations Atlanta



Delighted to have US Representative John Lewis as 2017 Grand Marshall. Huge thanks to Dave Fitzgerald and the Parade Committee for a wonderful day.



Great opportunity to promote Ireland and the Atlanta parade with [CBS 46'](#) [Jennifer Valdez](#)

Presentation of St. Patrick's Day Proclamation by Atlanta City Council





Synet, IDA Atlanta, the Consul General, and 2017's essay contest winner and her sponsors all spoke at this engaging annual breakfast. Special thanks to Bill Duffy for an exceptional event. Essay winner Dariana's gripping immigrant story inspired a [follow-up article](#) from AJC editor Kevin Riley.



Annual wreath-laying ceremony at Atlanta City Hall in honor of Father Thomas O'Reilly who is credited with saving Atlanta from Flames during the Civil War



Maurice Fitzpatrick speaks about his soon to be released documentary, *John Hume in America*

Georgia Commissioner for Economic Development Pat Wilson and Sysnet CEO Gabriel Moynagh cut the ribbon at Sysnet's official launch of its US operations in Atlanta.



With the cast of *The Daughters of Ireland in America*, profiling great Irish women writers. With CG Stephens L-R: Michael Hickey, Sandra Hughes, John Burke, Tyner Rushing



Irish News

The Taoiseach's St Patrick's Day visit the U.S. was a striking success. He had productive meetings with the President, Vice President, Speaker Ryan, Senate Minority Leader and business leaders and participated in a range of major events including the White House Reception, Vice President's Breakfast and speaker's lunch. Media coverage of the visit was prolific. Check out the speeches from the White House reception on [YouTube](#) or in [print](#).

The Government issued a [Statement](#) on Theresa May's triggering of Article 50, which formally began the UK's two-year exit process. An overview of this process, and information on Ireland's Brexit strategy is available [here](#).

In celebration of the EU's 60th birthday, a [Declaration](#) was jointly issued from Rome by the leaders of 27 member states, the European Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission reaffirming their commitment to a "Union that is safe and secure, prosperous, competitive, sustainable and socially responsible, and with the will and capacity of playing a key role in the world and of shaping globalisation."

Ireland's economic recovery is firmly established, with all key economic indicators pointing to continued solid growth, despite a challenging regional and global environment. The economy expanded 5.2% in 2016, and the unemployment rate has fallen below 6.6%, down from a peak of over 15% in 2012.

On March 30th, the Minister Charlie Flanagan launched the new [Online Passport Application Service](#), which will allow citizens over 18 years of age to process passport renewals online.

The Taoiseach announced that the Government has decided to hold [a referendum to amend the Constitution](#) to allow Irish citizens resident outside the State, including in Northern Ireland, to vote in Irish presidential elections.

An estimated half million people lined the streets of Dublin for its spectacular [2017 St. Patrick's Day Parade](#), the highlight of a [4-day Festival](#), led by Irish sailor and Olympic silver medalist Annalise Murphy as Grand Marshall. [RTE News](#) provided a colorful retrospective of St. Patrick's Day festivities around the world.

During his St. Patrick's Day visit to the U.S., [Taoiseach Enda Kenny launched](#) the new [Ireland.ie](#) portal, an initiative of the five-year [Creative Ireland Programme](#) which places culture and creativity at the centre of public policy. Also recently announced were details of Cruinniú na Cásca, a [national day of culture and creativity](#), which will take place on Easter Monday in Dublin and in every county nationwide.

In a statement of condolence on the [death of Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness](#), a key architect of the Good Friday Agreement, the Taoiseach said "his passing represents a significant loss, not only to politics in Northern Ireland but to the wider political landscape on this island and beyond."

Minister Flanagan extended condolences to the people of London following the [Westminster attack](#) and confirmed that one Irish person was amongst those injured.

Ireland is ranked first in the world for finance skills and third in the world for company and workforce productivity, with Irish labor productivity almost 35% above the EU 27 average.

In the last two months, two additional U.S. southeast tech companies announced investments into Ireland with Atlanta-based financial tech company [Kabbage](#) basing its new European headquarters in Dublin, and Raleigh software multinational, [Red Hat](#), expanding to Waterford where it will create 60 jobs.

The Taoiseach, together with Ministers Flanagan, O'Connor and Ross, launched new trade strategy, [Ireland Connected](#): Trading and Investing in a Dynamic World - targeting €26 billion in annual indigenous exports by 2020.

In Atlanta, Consul General Stephens was pleased to chat with Lois Reitzes, the host of WABE radio's "[City Lights](#)", about the Irish Government's Creative Ireland initiative, St. Patrick's Day and how it is celebrated in Atlanta. Irish Executive Chef Thomas McKeown, from the Hyatt Regency Atlanta, celebrated Irish food and drink with a St Patrick's Day broadcast on [Fox 5 Atlanta](#) supported by the Consulate and Bord Bia.

Congratulations to Atlanta based Jacinta King O' Sullivan, Loughrea native and director of the King O' Sullivan School of Irish Dance, who has been invited to judge the World Irish Dance Championships in Dublin in 2017, a recognition of the growth and development of Irish Dance in the South in recent years.

Upcoming Events in the Southeast

The 2017 [Savannah Music Festival](#), includes a performance by [the outstanding Máirtín O'Connor Trio](#) on [April 4th](#). They will also play in Asheville, NC on April 1st. Culture Ireland are supporting the Trio's programme.

[Arís Theatre](#) presents *Penelope* by Enda Walsh on Tuesday, April 4th at Stage Door Players, Dunwoody, 7:30 p.m., a contemporary comedy treatment of Penelope's suitors from Homer's *Odyssey*. [Tickets here](#).

Beeswing, a trio of women with a special love for the music of Ireland, play on tour with Irish musicians Turlach Boylan and Davey Mathias in Charleston, SC on April 7th and Columbia, SC on April 8, both at 7:30 p.m. [Tickets and information here](#).

North Carolina's Rose of Tralee selection will be announced April 9th at 5:00pm at Tyber Creek during a fun evening of entertainment for all. [More information and tickets here](#). (If that link doesn't work, go to [www.ticketleap.com](#) and type "Rose of Tralee" in the *Buy Tickets* search bar).

South Carolina's Rose of Tralee Selection Night is Saturday, April 29th at Ocean Creek Resort in Myrtle Beach. [Tickets and information here](#).

Kelly Porter Productions presents [Lisa Kelly, "The Voice of Ireland"](#) in concert at the Frederick Brown Jr. Amphitheatre in Peachtree City, Georgia on April 22, 2017.

Irish poet Dylan Brennan will be featured in American poet Campbell McGrath's "[Under the Influence](#)" event on Friday, April 21 at the Betsy Hotel in Miami Beach as part of the annual O Miami poetry festival. Dylan Brennan's visit is supported by Culture Ireland.

To find links to your favorite Southeastern GAA team, visit the website of [the Southeast Division GAA](#).